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Title Slide: Using Elementary/Secondary Information System (ElSi) to Access CCD Data

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This module introduces users to the Elementary/Secondary Information System. This module provides users with a description the ElSi data tool, discusses the advantages and disadvantages of using ElSi, and demonstrates how to use ElSi.

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The Elementary/Secondary Information System, or ElSi, is an NCES web application that allows users to quickly view and analyze public and private school data. It allows users to create custom tables and charts using data from the Common Core of Data, or CCD, and the Private School Universe Survey, or PSS. ElSi is the primary tool researchers can use to access CCD or PSS data.

Note that individual student-level data are not available through the CCD or PSS.

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There are several ways to access the ElSi tool. First, the tool can be accessed directly from the ElSi website. Second, users can access ElSi through the NCES homepage by hovering over the Data and Tools menu and clicking **Custom Datasets & Tables**. Finally, users will find ElSi on the CCD home page by clicking the Data and Tools menu.

The ElSi website, the NCES homepage, and/or the CCD homepage, can be accessed by clicking the corresponding underlined screen text.

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Using ElSi offers users a number of advantages. First ElSi can aggregate data from a lower level and display it at a higher level. For example, ElSi can display free lunch eligibility counts at the district level by aggregating the school level data. Second, ElSi displays the symbols for missing and not applicable to make the data easier to manage. ElSi also offers the ability for users to select data from multiple years and multiple files. For example, universe, fiscal, and completer data can be displayed on one table.

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ElSi also has some disadvantages that users should be aware of. First, data on closed schools and districts are not included in ElSi. Second, not all of the levels of detail from the data files are included in ElSi. Third, ElSi does not include information from the directory files. For example, since the directory files do not include all of the detailed information, such as enrollment counts, they are not included in ElSi. Finally, ElSi does not include Restricted-use data files.

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ElSi consists of three main components: *quick*Facts, *express*Tables, and *table*Generator. Each of these components will be explained in the following slides.

In addition, the ElSi homepage provides the resource *popular*Tables. This resource will link users to the most popular tables from the ElSi main page. *popular*Tables provides quick access to tables from our most recent releases, including the public school directory, private school directory, and other similar data files. It is also important to note that not all data files are available for the same year, so that may limit which tables you can create in the tools.

In order to access *quick*Facts, *express*Tables, and/or *table*Generator, please click on the corresponding underlined screen text.

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*quick*Facts is a tool that allows researchers to view single data elements for a state, district, or school. It allows researchers to view characteristic and financial data and contact information. It also can be used to generate charts and print data. In addition, researchers can link to *express*Tables for additional analysis from *quick*Facts.

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To use *quick*Facts, users will first select the level: either state, district, public school, private school. Then users will select the characteristic of interest: pupil/teacher ratio, revenue per pupil, total current expenditures per pupil, total enrollment, total expenditures, total revenue, or total teachers. Finally, researchers will search for and select the entity for which they want to see the data. For example, if users selected District as the level, they will need to search and select the district of interest in the **Select a District** box that opens after a characteristic is selected. The most recent year is already selected, but this can be changed to meet researcher needs.

In this example, the level is **District**, the characteristic is **Pupil/Teacher Ratio**, **2012-2013** as the year, and the entity is the district **Montgomery County Public Schools** in Rockville, MD. The results page will then display a table with the information requested.

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*express*Tables allows users to view created tables for a group of entities like all schools in a state or all states in the nation. Users can select the level, table and/or group.

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For this example, we'll see how *express*Tables can be used to generate a table with race data. On the *express*Table homepage, select a **Level** first (here we have selected District). Second, select a **Table** type (here we have selected School district Enrollments by Race/Ethnicity). Then select, a **State**, Maryland, and a **Year**, 2012-2013. Then select **View Table** to view the results.

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We can create a similar table using student and staff counts. By selecting **District**, then **School District**, **Enrollment/Teacher Counts**, **Maryland**, **2012-2013** and then **View Table**, a table will be created with teacher staff counts by student race and school.

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By using the *table*Generator, researchers can create tables that include EVERY school or district in the nation. These tables can also be exported into Excel and CSV formats and can save settings to be retrieved at a later time.

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Here we'll go through the steps for an example. To begin, researchers will select the unit or units for each row of the table. The options include state, core based statistical area, or CBSA, county, district, public or private school. For our example, we've selected **District** level data.

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In step two, researchers will select the years of data of interest. Multiple years can be selected for the table. Here we have selected **2010-2011 through 2012-2013**.

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In Step 3, researchers will select the variables of interest. Depending on what years have been selected, various tabs of variable groups are available to select as the columns of the table. Variable groups include information, characteristics, enrollment, teacher and staff, general finance, and dropout and completer.

Keep in mind that not all data files are available at the same time. The year selected directly relates to which variable groups are available in the data tool. For example, fiscal data are typically released after nonfiscal data. Therefore, if you select the most recent school year, fiscal data may not be available.

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In the example above, a district level table is being created for data from 2008-2009 through 2012-2013. On the left, there are multiple options from which users can choose to select table column variables. The data are available in groups such as enrollment, teacher and staff, and finance.

The green checkmark can be used to select all available years of data depending on user interest.

On the right side of the page, the selected columns are listed. As we can see, the table includes agency type and enrollment counts. This is a good way to review what will be included in the table and remove any unneeded items.

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Since *table*Generator can aggregate data from multiple levels, it is critical to understand the difference between similar variables from different levels. The higher the level, the more variable options that are available.

For example, enrollment data are collected at the state, district, and school level. If a state-level table is needed, users will select the following: Enrollment from the state-level file; aggregate data from the district-level file; and aggregate data from the school-level file.

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The source of the data is included in the variable name. For example, **Total Students** is derived from the State, and **Total Students** for Ungraded and Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade come from the District. Ungraded students are those who are not assigned to a particular grade.

For this example, a table is being created at the state level. The tool provides both the number of total students and the number of ungraded students from the District level.

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Step 4 allows researchers to select their filters. After variables have been selected, filters (if desired) can be selected to apply to the table. Any filter variable can be selected for the desired table.

Begin by pressing the **Select Filters** button below the variable list.

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Step 5 allows users to create the table. Once the filters have been selected, researchers are able to create the table by selecting **Create Table**. The table should run in less than two minutes. It if times-out, however, researchers should select fewer variables and repeat the process. Here we can see an example of the first row of a table created through *table*Generator.

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If changes to the table are needed, researchers should click the Modify button above the table.

To create a table ID, users will select the **Save** option. The **Table ID** can be entered at the top of the tool to pull up the specific table to be created. The table can be exported into Excel or CSV using the buttons above the table.

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This module has described the ElSi data tool. It has also discussed some of the advantages and disadvantages associated with ElSi. In addition, it has demonstrated how to use the ElSi data tool.

Important resources that have been provided throughout the module are summarized here for your reference.

You may now proceed to the next module in the series or exit the module.